

Resume Writing Tips

Although the tips listed below may appear repetitious, these ideas are specifically geared to technical resumes.

1. Use as many “buzzwords” as you can to reflect your work and school experience. For example list all operating systems and special applications such as UNIX and SPSS with which you have experience. Use key words that appear in the job advertisement.
2. Begin sentences with action verbs (see list below). Portray yourself as someone who is active.
3. Don’t sell yourself short. Treat your resume as an advertisement for your abilities.
4. Be specific about your accomplishments and give them emphasis.
5. Don’t exaggerate your qualifications.
6. Be concise. Avoid lengthy descriptions.
7. Always use correct grammar and spelling. Have a friend proofread.
8. Use high quality bond paper.

**Physicists are particularly well suited
for interdisciplinary research
because of their thorough grounding
in fundamental concepts
and the power and broad applicability
of their theoretical, experimental,
and computational methodologies.**

Kenneth C. Hass, Ford Research Laboratories

I went to a large career fair that was part of the national Society of Women Engineers (SWE) convention in Chicago. I sent my first round of resumes out to those companies. I also posted my resume on the SWE Resume Database. However, the avenue that produced my first job offer from the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), my first employer, was to go through my university's placement office. I signed up for an interview when MoDOT came to campus. I got a job offer. I would consider collegiate career placement centers and university sponsored career fairs to be the best opportunities for college seniors.

Sharon A. Lappin, P. E.
Project Engineer
Missouri Department of Transportation

Curriculum Vitae

As stated earlier, a curriculum vitae (CV) is mainly used when applying for research positions. CVs are always used in the academic world. CVs are also used when applying for educational jobs, research jobs in government or private laboratories, or for a fellowship or grant. Like a resume, a CV is a summary of your educational and professional background that makes you qualified for a particular job.

Unlike your resume, which is typically one page, CVs are several pages in length and should include a full list of your publications, honors, awards, committee work, memberships, and other professional connections and experiences.

The format of a CV is the same as a resume discussed above. The same sectional organization can be used. In addition, however, there is a final section where publications are listed in reverse chronological order. If you have several publications, you could organize them in subsections: peer-reviewed publications, in-press publications, and conference proceedings.

If your research has attracted attention and you have given invited talks, you should have a section, just before the section on publications, where you list invited talks.

As with the resume, references go on a separate page.

Many PhD resumes just scream “I have no idea what your business environment might be; I expect to do more of my thesis work and it’s up to you to extract the value.” It is critically important that PhDs demonstrate excellent communication skills, and an understanding of the business context of the company to which they are applying, or they can be pigeonholed. Please note that these considerations apply even at places like Bell Labs, IBM Watson, etc. not just “dirt under your fingernails places.”

John Sommerer, Director, Research and Development Technology
Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratories

Action Verbs for Your Resume

There are dull words and exciting words. The former can put a reader to sleep, the latter can grab the reader's attention. Action verbs are action words and, when used in a resume, they represent you as an active person. Action verbs are recommended. Below are action verbs for all occasions.

ACTION Verbs . . .

. . . to express Accomplishments

Achieved	Expedited	Pioneered
Attained	Improved	Resolved
Completed	Increased	Restored
Convinced	Initiated	Revitalized
Doubled	Introduced	Revolutionized
Discovered	Invented	Spearheaded
Eliminated (costs)	Launched	Strengthened
Expanded	Originated	Transformed

. . . to express Communication skills

Addressed	Edited	Persuaded
Arbitrated	Enlisted	Promoted
Arranged	Formulated	Proposed
Adhered	Influenced	Publicized
Collaborated	Interpreted	Reconciled
Corresponded	Lectured	Recruited
Developed	Mediated	Spoke
Directed	Moderated	Translated
Drafted	Negotiated	Wrote

. . . to express Creative skills

Acted	Fashioned	Revised
Conceptualized	Illustrated	Revitalized
Created	Instituted	Set up
Customized	Integrated	Shaped
Designed	Performed	Simplified
Directed	Planned	Streamlined
Established	Proved	Structured

**Do not verbalize nouns. Strategy is a noun;
strategize is a verbalized noun and is not a word.
Many people take offense at such a practice.**

... to express Detail skills

Approved	Generated	Purchased
Arranged	Implemented	Recorded
Catalogued	Inspected	Retrieved
Classified	Monitored	Screened
Collected	Operated	Simplified
Compiled	Ordered	Specified
Dispatched	Organized	Tabulated
Executed	Prepared	Validated
Filed	Processed	Verified

... to express ability to Help others

Assessed	Familiarized	Rehabilitated
Assisted	Guided	Represented
Clarified	Inspired	Reinforced
Coached	Led	Supported
Counseled	Motivated	Taught
Demonstrated	Participated	Trained
Diagnosed	Provided	Verified
Educated	Referred	

... to express Management skills

Administered	Developed	Produced
Analyzed	Directed	Recommended
Assigned	Evaluated	Reorganized
Chaired	Led	Revamped
Consolidated	Organized	Reviewed
Contracted	Oversaw	Scheduled
Coordinated	Planned	Supervised
Delegated	Prioritized	

... to express Research skills

Clarified	Evaluated	Interviewed
Collected	Examined	Investigated
Critiqued	Extracted	Organized
Diagnosed	Identified	Reviewed
Discovered	Inspected	Summarized
Elucidated	Interpreted	Surveyed

... to express Teaching Skills

Adapted	Enabled	Lectured
Advised	Encouraged	Persuaded
Clarified	Evaluated	Presented
Coached	Explained	Set goals
Communicated	Facilitated	Stimulated
Conducted	Guided	Taught
Coordinated	Informed	Trained

... to express Technical skills

Assembled	Devised	Pinpointed
Built	Engineered	Programmed
Calculated	Fabricated	Remodeled
Computed	Maintained	Repaired
Designed	Operated	Solved

**Whate'er you think,
good words, I think,
were best.**

William Shakespeare

**Proper words in proper places,
make the true definition
of a style.**

Jonathan Swift

Sample Resumes/CVs

Chronological Resume

Robert Goodlong
137 Fine Structure St.
Arlington, VA

TEL: (324) 648 4698
FAX: (324) 648 5285
Email: rgoodlong@abc.org

Career Objective (See Note 1)

Outline your career objective (relate it to the available position).

Education (See Note 2)

9/00-6/02 MS Physics, Sommerfeld University

9/96-6/00 BS Physics, Sommerfeld University (*magna cum laude*)

Experience: (start with most current experience/job)

9/01-6/02 Research Assistant, Department of Electrical Engineering, Sommerfeld University
Briefly describe the scope and responsibilities of the job you currently hold. Be sure to include any major accomplishments that demonstrate your suitability for the job for which you are applying. You may use bullet or paragraph format.

9/00-6/01 Teaching Assistant, Department of Physics, Sommerfeld University
Again, briefly describe the scope and responsibilities of the position. Emphasize those accomplishments that relate to the job for which you are applying.

6/00-9/00 Internship, Digital Atomics, Falls Church, VA
Include a sentence describing your responsibilities at Digital Atomics.

Other Accomplishments

List honors or awards outside of educational or other achievements. You may also want to list memberships in professional organizations. Be brief.

Note 1: If your career objective connects rather directly with the position you are applying for, a career objective statement is an option to consider.

Note 2: Either education or experience can be the lead entry. If you have experiences that have prepared you for the position you seek, lead with experiences rather than education.

In a resume do not:

~ include name of your high school

~ include salary information

**~ include personal information
(marriage status, family details,
religious interests)**

~ include names of references

Chronological Resume

Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone Number
E-mail address

Objective

Insert the type of work you want to do. Customize for each job opening.

Experience

COMPANY/LABORATORY NAME

Job Title, Department/Division, Dates

- *Emphasize results, accomplishments and performance.
- * Don't list only job description and duties - show how you made a difference.
- * List each accomplishment statement in order of importance.
- *Use an action verb as first word for each "bullet".
- *Keep to one or two lines.
- *Be honest. Be positive. Be specific. Be brief.
- *Be quantitative whenever possible, i.e., increased by 30%.

Job Title, Department/Division, Dates

- *Omit detailed descriptions of nonrelevant earlier jobs.
- *Use a consistent format.
- *Account for lengthy time gaps (i.e., school, pregnancy/baby, self-employed).
- *Two pages maximum (advanced degree). Attach publications separately.

COMPANY/LABORATORY NAME

Job Title, Department/Division Dates

- *Keep a one-inch margin on all four sides.
- *Print on top-quality resume paper - white, cream or gray.
- *Proofread until there are absolutely no errors; have several other people proofread it as well.

Education and Training

List in the following order: degree, major, school, city and state, year of graduation. If it is recent and relevant to the position, put this section before "Experience"; if not, include here.

Include any training that supports the job you seek. Incorporate any other credentials or certificates.

Optional: Technical skills, military service, awards, professional associations.

Functional Resume

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone Number and e-mail address

Professional Summary: Briefly describe your employment history, highlighting key accomplishments or areas that you want to sell to a prospective employer.

Areas of Effectiveness (Be very specific in this listing)

Number 1 skill:

Latest and Best Example of use of this skill. Can include one assignment or part of your current or last job.

Next Best Example of use of this skill. Can be made up of a job element, an assignment, or major accomplishment.

Next Best Example of use of this skill. Can be an older example, a significant accomplishment, or achievement.

Number 2 skill:

Best Example of use of this skill. Again, can be made up of single events, assignments or parts of jobs that you enjoyed or did well.

Next Best Example of use of this skill. Earlier, older or less significant events.

Number 3 skill:

Best Example of the use of this skill. Sometimes involves hobbies, nonpaid work activities, or may be derived from less important work skills.

Employment History

Latest or current job: Title, Organization & Dates

Previous Job: Title, Organization & Dates

Previous Job: Title, Organization & Dates

Education

Begin with highest and latest degree OR educational accomplishment, then work backward. List DEGREE / DIPLOMA, SCHOOL, DATE.

Other Professional Accomplishments

Honors or awards, superior achievement, memberships in professional organizations, and the like.

Functional/Skill Resume

Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone Number
e-mail Address

Objective

This statement answers the question, "What are you seeking?" In one or two sentences, address the type of position, title, or area you seek. Include the level of responsibility and two or three personal characteristics or skills needed on the job you have targeted.

Summary

Include a descriptive summary of yourself in three or four sentences. This should contain how many years of experience you have, the environment in which you worked, your areas of expertise, and brief descriptions of your most salient professional or scientific characteristics. This should give a quick image of your overall qualifications and invite the employer to continue.

Areas of Accomplishment

Key Skill

- * Cluster your experience under major skills areas.
- * Incorporate your strongest skill first.
- * Focus on accomplishments in functional or technical areas.
- * Select and organize key skills to support your objective statement.

Key Skill

- * Describe your acquired capabilities that match with the employer's job qualifications.
- * Feature the skills that are essential to succeed on the desired job.
- * Emphasize transferable skills that relate to the position you seek.
- * Refer to the action verbs and adjective list.

Key Skill

- * This resume should be used when changing careers, or you are trying to explain an erratic employment history.
- * Functional resumes may be used when you wish to increase your level of responsibility.
- * Use this format when you want to expand your breadth and have an unusual combination of functional areas and skills.

Employment History

2001 - present Job Title Place of Employment